

Environmental Services Department

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Dear Interested Party,

The State of Minnesota has made available grant money to fix Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems (SSTS) that are Imminent Threats to Public Health and Safety (ITPH). The purpose of the grant program is to promote public health and welfare by preventing, reducing and eliminating water pollution. The amount of grant money is limited and will be available for a limited time.

Eligible Expenses

The grant program assists in financing the design, permit costs, installation, repair and replacement of Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems which are identified an Imminent Threat to Public Health and Safety as established by the Stearns County Subsurface Sewage Treatment System Ordinance #422 and are on privately owned property. Funds may not be used to increase the capacity of an individual SSTS beyond what is reasonably required to serve existing buildings or for new construction or for upgrading a SSTS due to property transfer. Grant funds will not be used for well installation or abandonment.

- ✓ **Any work done prior to the date the grant has been executed will not be covered by the grant, this includes system design.**

Eligible Recipients

In order to qualify for these grant funds the property owner must own the real property for which the improvement is to be made and must qualify under the USDA Rural Development low income guidelines (see attached income chart). Grant funding is not transferrable upon a sale of a property.

Project Funding

Grant applications will be submitted utilizing the “accepted bid”. The “accepted bid” will be the lesser of the 2 bids that are submitted by the property owner as part of this application packet. If the project is funded by the State, the grant will pay up to 95% of the “accepted bid” or actual installation cost whichever is less. The property owner is responsible for a 5% payment of the “accepted bid” plus any overages to that bid quotation.

Application Process

To submit an application, gather and remit the following information:

- Complete, sign and return the “Subsurface Sewage System Upgrade Grant Application and Income Certification” form to the Stearns County Environmental Services Department.
- Obtain and submit two (2) bids from licensed Subsurface Sewage Treatment System installers for a replacement system including all permit, design and installation costs. A list of area wide contractors is attached.

- A documented ITPH certificate of non-compliance. Property owners may self-condemn their SSTS at no cost, by having the Department come to the property and document the SSTS status.

*****Once an SSTS is documented as an ITPH, and upgrade will be required regardless of whether grant funding is received or not!*****

All applications are due to the Department by **Tuesday, September 13, 2011**, to ensure adequate time for processing and submittal to the State. Any application missing any required documentation will not be submitted for consideration.

Financial documents such as a copy of your most recent signed federal tax return, including any W-2 forms; two (2) current and consecutive pay stubs for each adult household member; or documentation of non-employment income (Social Security, pension benefits, etc.) may be required to be submitted in order to verify income levels. If needed, the Department will contact you and request that you submit these items.

Contracting Procedures and Requirements

A grant agreement will be executed that stipulates that if the updated SSTS fails due to negligence or misuse, the grant must be repaid up to 150% of the grant award monies to the Environmental Services Department.

All contractors must be Minnesota Pollution Control Agency licensed SSTS installers or designers.

If a project is funded, a contract will be executed for the installation of the SSTS between the property owner, contractor and County. The selection of the contractor is the sole responsibility of the homeowner. If the homeowner chooses the contractor with a higher bid, the grant will pay only the amount of the lower bid unless the Environmental Services Department determines that the lower bid will not adequately cover the work that is required to make the sewage treatment system compliant with current regulations.

Property Inspections and Completion

Stearns County Environmental Services will be responsible for conducting inspections for each approved project as required by Stearns County Ordinances.

Upon project completion, the licensed MPCA SSTS contractor shall invoice Stearns County for the final actual cost of the project. The property owner(s) will be invoiced by Stearns County for the five (5)% non-state match, and upon receipt of property owners funds Stearns County will pay in full the invoice submitted by the licensed MPCA SSTS contractor not to exceed the awarded grant total plus property owner five (5)% match or actual SSTS cost, whichever is less.

Further Questions

If you have any questions concerning any of the information provided above; need assistance in completing the application form; or would like to schedule a time for staff to verify an ITPH system, please contact either Susan McGuire or Mark Latterell with the Stearns County Environmental Services Department at 320.656.3613.